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The Duriez Method: 100 Questions to Build a World, a Character, and a Legacy

Marcel Ray Duriez 7 min read · Just now

(Adapted from classic literary questionnaires but reimagined for visionary authors.)

Part I — The Core Identity of a Character

1. What is your character's full name, and how do they feel about it?
2. Do they go by any nicknames, aliases, or titles?
3. What is the color and texture of their hair?
4. What is the color and shape of their eyes?
5. Describe their most striking facial feature.
6. Do they have a birthmark, scar, or tattoo? Tell the story behind it.
7. Who raised them? Who shaped their values?

8. Who are the three people closest to them?
9. Who do they secretly wish they were closer to?
10. Where were they born? Where have they lived since?
11. Where do they truly feel at home?
12. Where do they go when they're angry, ashamed, or in pain?
13. What is their greatest fear, and who knows about it?
14. What secret do they guard most fiercely?
15. When was the last time they laughed out loud?
16. When did they last fall in love or have their heart broken?

Part II — The Inner World of a Character

1. Open their refrigerator: what do you see?
2. Look at their bedroom floor: what's scattered there?
3. Check their nightstand: what objects live there?
4. Look in their garbage can: what are they discarding?
5. Look at their feet: describe what's there.
6. What smells dominate their memory of childhood? Why are they so vivid?
7. When they clean their space, what's easy to throw away? What's impossible to part with? Why?
8. It's Saturday at noon — what are they doing? Describe it in detail.

9. What do they eat for breakfast when no one's looking?
10. What's one childhood memory that still defines them?
11. They're getting ready for a night out. Where are they going, what do they wear, and with whom?

Part III — The Author's Proustian Lens

1. What is your character's idea of perfect happiness?
2. What is their greatest fear?
3. Which personal flaw do they most struggle with?
4. Which flaw do they most hate in others?
5. Which living person do they admire most?
6. What is their greatest indulgence?
7. What is their current state of mind?
8. Which virtue do they consider overrated?
9. On what occasion do they lie?
10. What about their appearance do they most dislike?
11. Which living person do they most despise?
12. What quality do they most like in a man?
13. What quality do they most like in a woman?
14. Which words or phrases do they overuse?
15. What or who is the greatest love of their life?

16. When and where were they happiest?
17. Which talent would they most like to have?
18. If they could change one thing about themselves, what would it be?
19. What do they consider their greatest achievement?
20. If they died and returned as a person or thing, what would it be?
21. Where would they most like to live?
22. What is their most treasured possession?
23. What do they regard as the lowest depth of misery?
24. What is their favorite occupation or pastime?
25. What is their most marked characteristic?
26. What do they most value in their friends?
27. Who are their favorite writers?
28. Who is their hero of fiction?
29. Which historical figure do they most identify with?
30. Who are their heroes in real life?
31. What are their favorite names?
32. What do they most dislike?
33. What is their greatest regret?
34. How would they like to die?
35. What is their personal motto?

Part IV — The Duriez Meta-Author Questions (Your Signature Twist)

1. Why does your character exist in this story?
2. What would your book lose without them?
3. How does their journey mirror or challenge your own?
4. What emotional truth do they reveal to your reader?
5. What is the biggest question they ask but never answer?
6. What secret of yours lives inside them?
7. If your saga vanished tomorrow, which scene of theirs would you rewrite first?
8. How would your character write a book about you?

Part V — Building a Saga (Your Authorship)

1. Why do you feel called to write this saga?
2. Who is your imagined reader for it?
3. What truth or story is too large for one book and must be many?
4. How do you keep track of continuity across volumes?
5. What daily habits sustain your writing?
6. How do you recover from burnout?
7. What do you sacrifice to keep writing?

8. What do you gain?
9. How do you hold faith in your vision when others doubt it?
10. What single sentence would summarize your life's work?

Part VI — Closing Reflection

1. What world does your story leave your reader in?
2. What question should your reader still be asking at the end?
3. Which character is your mirror?
4. Which is your shadow?
5. What do you want carved on your writing desk?
6. If your saga could speak, what would it say to you?
7. How would your characters describe your writing?
8. What is your idea of literary immortality?
9. When was the first time you knew you were a writer?
10. What is your last line — on the page and in life?

100 "Duriez Authorship Questions" — a framework you could give other writers who wonder how on earth you created something as massive as the *Nevaeh Saga*.

These would mix Gotham's character-level detail, Proust's philosophy, and your own perspective on *visionary, large-scale authorship*. Here's a structured draft of what your **100 questions** could look like, broken into categories:

I. Vision & Purpose (1–15)

1. Why are you writing this book?
2. What truth or feeling is too big to fit in a single novel?
3. Who is your ideal reader?
4. What do you want them to feel after finishing?
5. What is the central theme that echoes across your work?
6. What would you sacrifice to finish this project?
7. Do you write for yourself first, or for others?
8. How do you define literary immortality?
9. If no one read your work, would you still write it?
10. What story only *you* can tell?
11. How does your worldview shape your writing?
12. What legacy do you want your words to leave?
13. What question drives your saga forward?
14. How does your writing respond to the world around you?
15. What is the spiritual or emotional core of your book?

II. Scale & Structure (16–30)

1. Why does your story require so many words?

2. How do you organize a saga that spans thousands of pages?
3. What holds your universe together?
4. Do you write linearly, or in fragments?
5. How do you avoid losing the thread of your story?
6. Do you think of your books as one long novel or many smaller ones?
7. How do you mark time inside your story world?
8. What role does repetition or echo play in your saga?
9. Do your characters age with the series?
10. Do you outline or improvise?
11. What symbols return across your books?
12. How do you balance subplots and the main plot?
13. What is the “spine” of your saga?
14. How do you prevent contradictions in continuity?
15. Do you know your ending before you begin?

III. Characters & Voices (31–50)

1. Who was your first character?
2. Who surprised you the most as you wrote?
3. How do you breathe life into minor characters?
4. Do you model characters on real people?

5. Which character is most like you?
6. Which is least like you?
7. What do your characters fear most?
8. What secret do they carry?
9. Do your villains believe they are villains?
10. Which character would you want to meet in real life?
11. Who breaks your heart the most?
12. How do you decide who lives or dies?
13. Which relationships drive your story forward?
14. How do you balance love and conflict in relationships?
15. What kind of humor exists in your world?
16. Do your characters grow or remain constant?
17. What voice comes easiest to you?
18. What voice is hardest?
19. How do you choose names for your characters?
20. Which character would write their own book if you let them?

IV. Process & Endurance (51–70)

1. What time of day do you write best?
2. Do you write every day?

3. What rituals prepare you to write?
4. How many words can you write in one sitting?
5. How do you write through exhaustion?
6. What do you do when you get stuck?
7. Do you revise while writing, or only after?
8. How many drafts does one book take?
9. How do you protect your writing time from interruptions?
10. Do you handwrite or type?
11. What tools or software keep your story organized?
12. How do you track continuity across thousands of pages?
13. Do you reread your earlier volumes while writing the next?
14. What do you do when you lose confidence in your project?
15. How do you keep going when no one else believes in the scale?
16. Do you ever dream scenes before writing them?
17. What role does music play in your process?
18. Do you prefer silence or noise while writing?
19. What physical toll has writing taken on you?
20. What keeps you coming back, book after book?

V. Language & Style (71–85)

1. What words or phrases do you overuse?
2. How do you build rhythm in long passages?
3. Do you experiment with narrative form?
4. How do you use imagery to sustain such length?
5. What metaphors define your saga?
6. Do you write more by intuition or by calculation?
7. How do you balance clarity and mystery?
8. Do you ever let language lead the story?
9. What literary traditions inspire your style?
10. Do you consciously echo myths or archetypes?
11. How do you signal theme through language?
12. Do you write fast and cut later, or slow and exact?
13. What role does dialogue play in your saga?
14. Do you favor short sentences or long, winding ones?
15. What passage in your work are you most proud of?

VI. Philosophy & Self (86–100)

1. What is your idea of perfect happiness as a writer?
2. What is your greatest fear as an author?
3. What flaw in yourself do you battle through writing?

4. Which writers do you most admire?
5. Which ones challenge you?
6. What is your greatest extravagance as a writer?
7. What virtue do you most overrate in literature?
8. What vice do you secretly value?
9. Which living person do you most want to read your work?
10. What historical figure would understand your saga best?
11. What do you hope readers whisper to each other after finishing?
12. If your saga were destroyed, what piece would you rewrite first?
13. How would you like your readers to describe your legacy?
14. If you came back as a character in your own work, who would it be?
15. What is your motto as a writer of the longest novel ever written?

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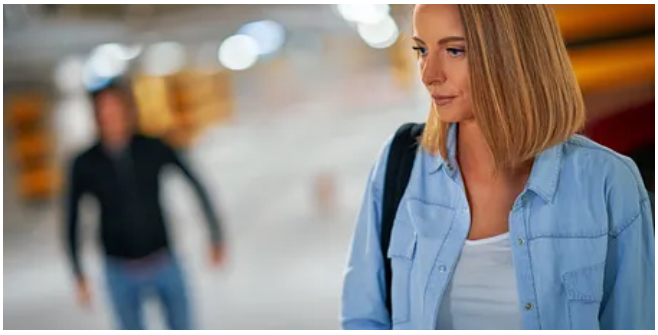

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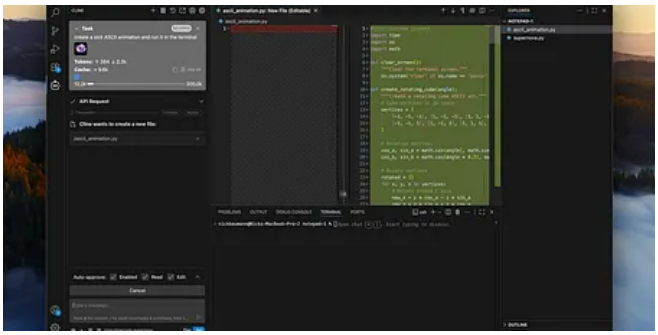

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